

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 11445 291032Z  
ACTION INR-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 11445

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: JA, PINR, OVIP  
SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S TRIP: FOREIGN MINISTER HATOYAMA

REFS: (A) TOKYO 0710; (B) STATE 173274

1. AS NOTED IN REF A, PM FUKUDA'S CHOICE OF IICHIRO HATOYAMA AS FONMIN LAST DECEMBER WAS SURPRISE. THOUGH SCION OF FAMOUS JAPANESE FAMILY, HATOYAMA WAS RELATIVELY UNKNOWN FORMER FINANCE MINISTRY BUREAUCRAT AND FIRST-TERM UPPER HOUSE DIET MEMBER. UNLIKE MOST OF HIS PREDECESSORS AS FONMIN, HE COULD CLAIM NEITHER PERSONAL POLITICAL CLOUT AS LEADER OF MAJOR LDP FACTION (SUCH AS FUKUDA, OHIRA OR MIKI) NOR PREVIOUS FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERTISE (SUCH AS MIYAZAWA). IT WAS APPARENT THAT FUKUDA'S SELECTION OF HATOYAMA WAS NOT DICTATED BY ANY FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATION BUT RATHER BY HISQUALIFICATION OF MORE OBVIOUS CANDIDATES AND BY NEED TO BALANCE INTRA-PARTY FACTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN CABINET. HE WAS ALSO HIGHLY RESPECTED BY FUKUDA FOR HIS BUDGET EXPERTISE.

2. FONMIN'S DUTIES REQUIRE THAT HE NOT ONLY DEAL WITH FOREIGN COUNTERPARTS, BUT ALSO SERVE AS SENIOR FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR WITHIN CABINET AND AS GOJ'S FOREIGN POLICY SPOKESMAN TO BOTH DIET AND PRESS. THERE IS GENERAL CONSENSUS AMONG FONOFF OFFICIALS AND JAPANESE POLITICAL OBSERVERS THAT HATOYAMA HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY "WEAK" FONMIN IN THESE AREAS.

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 11445 291032Z

3. HATOYAMA'S PERFORMANCE IN HIS MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN DIGNITARIES HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN UNIMPRESSIVE. THOUGH HIGHLY INTELLIGENT AND WELL-BRIEFED, HE HAS OFTEN CONVEYED RATHER DIFFIDENT AND COLORLESS IMPRESSION. ON OCCASION HE HAS GIVEN APPEARANCE OF DROPPING OUT OF DISCUSSION AND RELYING UPON HIS SUBORDINATES TO CARRY

ON EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. ACCUSTOMED TO GRADUAL AND INDIRECT CONSENSUS-BUILDING FROM HIS YEARS AS FINANCE MINISTRY BUREAUCRAT, HATOYAMA HAS APPARENTLY BEEN ILL AT EASE IN MORE DIRECT, ADVERSARIAL SITUATIONS WITH FOREIGNERS REQUIRING FORTHRIGHT ARTICULATION OF POSITIONS. UNLIKE HIS ENGLISH-SPEAKING PREDECESSOR MIYAZAWA, HATOYAMA DOES NOT SEEM TO USE SUCH MEETINGS TO ELICIT INFORMATION FROM HIS VISITORS.

4. HATOYAMA'S TEMPERMENT AND LACK OF POLITICAL POWER BASE HAVE PLACED HIM AT DISADVANTAGE VIS-A-VIS OTHER CABINET PERSONALITIES IN FORMULATION AND EXECUTION OF POLICY ON PARTICULAR ISSUES. INITIATIVE WITHIN GOJ DECISION-MAKING PROCESS ON TERRITORIAL WATERS AND NUCLEAR REPROCESSING, FOR INSTANCE HAS VISIBLY RESTED WITH AGRICULTURE-FORESTRY MINISTER SUZUKI AND SCIENCE--TECHNOLOGY AGENCY DIRGEN UNO RESPECTIVELY. UNUSUALLY AGGRESSIVE AND LOQUACIOUS CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY SONODA HAS FREQUENTLY UPSTAGED FONMIN IN COMMENTING ON FOREIGN POLICY TO JAPANESE PRESS, MUCH TO CHAGRIN OF BOTH FONOFF PROFESSIONALS AND THOSE JOURNALISTS ASSIGNED TO COVER HATOYAMA.

5. IT WOULD BE MISTAKE, HOWEVER, TO OVERDRAW HATOYAMA'S WEAKNESS OR TO DISMISS HIM AS UNIMPORTANT. GOJ DECISION-MAKING IS COLLEGIAL BY NATURE, IN WHICH AN AGGRESSIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 11445 291032Z

INDEPENDENT OR ACTIVIST FONMIN WOULD BE AN ANOMALY. FONOFF HAS ALWAYS HAD TO SHARE DECISION-MAKING POWER ON PARTICULAR ISSUES WITH POLITICIANS AND DOMESTIC MINISTRIES. DESPITE HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH HEADLINE-GRABBING, IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT SONODA IN FACT EXERCISES GREATER INFLUENCE THAN HATOYAMA AND FONOFF WITH PM FUKUDA ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. HE IS ALSO A THOROUGHLY PLEASANT, WARM PERSONALITY, IF SHY, AND WELL LIKED IF NOT ADMIRER BY HIS SUBORDINATES.

6. WHILE HATOYAMA SUFFERS FROM UNCOMPLIMENTARY PRESS, HE HAS NOT MADE ANY MAJOR BLUNDERS, NOR IS HE LIKELY TO. THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD HE WILL LEAVE CABINET BEFORE A CABINET SHUFFLE EXPECTED IN NOVEMBER AT EARLIEST. EVEN THEN, REQUIREMENTS OF INTRA-LDP FACTIONAL BALANCE AND PERSONALITY PROBLEMS WILL PRESENT FUKUDA WITH DIFFICULTIES SHOULD HE SEEK A BROADLY ACCEPTABLE REPLACEMENT.  
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## Message Attributes

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